

Our Work –

Education

The ability to read and write – or literacy -- is a basic skill for people to live and work in today's world. Yet more than XX percent of the world's population are not literate. More than 1XX million children who should be in school are not. Their opportunities for productive lives will be limited. For this reason, USAID emphasizes programs of support for basic education.

Higher levels of education are also important for economies and societies to succeed. The priority that governments place on “investing in people” is often an important indicator of their commitment to providing economic opportunities to their populations. Increasingly, modern economies require significant numbers of people to be able to handle advanced concepts of science and technology, law and governance, and business. Competitive economies require workers to be able to learn new skills on a continuous basis as technologies and methods of production and marketing change rapidly with global markets.

Without sound conceptual and technical skills acquired in secondary schools, community colleges, and universities, youth in developing countries will be unable to be as productive and as innovative as they could – and should be. In addition to the emphasis on basic education, therefore, USAID supports a wide variety of other training, workforce development, and higher education programs. We have found it useful to facilitate partnerships between American universities and colleges and similar institutions in developing and transition countries. These partnerships strengthen faculties and administrations in both developing countries and the United States, providing ongoing benefits to students in both settings.

USAID provides short-term training opportunities to hundreds of thousands of individuals in developing and transition countries each year. Sometimes the courses are only one week long, focused on a specific topic or skill. In other cases, courses can last as long as six months and involve travel and internships in several organizations. A flexible approach to education and training enables USAID to respond to the variety of learning challenges that are being faced by people around the world as they live and work.